



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement of Condolences to the Russian Federation

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 9, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of the government and people of the United States, I want to express our deepest condolences to the Russian people, and especially to the people of Beslan, for the hostage-taking at School No. 1 and the brutal murders and injuries that followed.

Ruthless terrorists have attacked Russia multiple times in recent weeks – the Ryzhskaya Metro station bombing in Moscow, the destruction of the Sibir Airlines and the Volga-Aviaexpress aircraft on August 24, and the hostage-taking and deliberate murders in Beslan all of that showing once again their willingness to take the lives of innocent civilians, even schoolchildren.

As Americans, we stand with you now, just as Russia stood with us on September 11, 2001. As President Bush said this week to President Putin, the American people stand "shoulder to shoulder" with our Russian partners in the fight against global terror.

Events in Russia over the past two weeks have unfortunately shown that much work needs to be done to combat terrorism. We have seen once again that terrorism has become a global menace that no nation can escape and no nation will be able to solve on its own.

We have learned the necessity of close international cooperation in a struggle where the enemy cannot be defined by territory, by nationality, by weapons or by uniform.

Over the past three years, our cooperation through the OSCE in the war against terrorism has emphasized what we can do to make each other stronger and more secure.

Yet, as the tragedy in Beslan reminds us, we still need to do much more. Every victim of terrorism, whether American or Russian, Spaniard or Australian, is one victim too many. We remember and grieve for them all.

Mr. Chairman, terrorists have once again demonstrated that they have neither borders, nor religious or moral rules. They are utterly immoral. Their goal is death and destruction.

The fight against them must be carried out by a shared commitment to the values and principles of our common civilization.

Our efforts, here at the OSCE and elsewhere, must embody the values to which we are committed - human rights and representative democracy - so that our children may live in a world where terrorists do not have fresh soil to cultivate hatred and in a world where we do not have to mourn schoolchildren shot in the back.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.